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Consequences of Loss of the Vehicle Over North Korea

5. Should the North Koreans succeed in downing the vehicle, they would make even more propaganda capital out of the operation. They would seek, not only to demonstrate their military prowess and to deter further flights, but, more important, they would use the incident to exacerbate US-ROK relations if the flight could plausibly be linked with an American base in South Korea. They would charge that the US was using the ROK as a base for aggressive operations against the people of North Korea. Moreover, North Korea would emphasize the alleged US control over the regime of Pak Chong-hui. This would be particularly damaging to US-ROK relations if officials remained ignorant [] until after the vehicle had been downed.

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6. In the non-Communist world, news of the overflight, whether or not successfully completed, would probably produce a moderate reaction. There would probably be no widespread apprehension that international tensions would be dangerously raised. On the other hand, much Free World opinion would question whether the advantages of the venture justified even minor risks of increasing tensions. In any event, there would be general concern over the potential implications of the flight for the Korean armistice.

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